



A Caco general now confined in Port-au-Prince penitentiary. He was captured by Marines. He is typical of the Caco leaders most of whom are now killed off.

Latin-America Is Watching Our Handling of Hayti

THE Harding Administration has inherited from the Wilson Administration many perplexing and vexing situations, but the future policy of this country in respect to the little "Black Republics" of Latin-American waters is one which is of great concern not only in Washington, but is being watched closely by the countries to the south of us, which are the beneficiaries of the declaration known to the world as the Monroe Doctrine. This and other articles will take up for discussion that which goes to make up the problem. The writer spent some time in Hayti as a newspaper correspondent and his knowledge of conditions may be accepted as authoritative and sufficient.

By WILBUR FORREST



ADOLPH BOURGOT, Gendarme sergeant, who testified he saw an American lieutenant shoot three prisoners at Hencho.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, on his famous voyage in 1492, was the first to annex the great Western Hemisphere to the ancient maps of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The island of Hayti, lying immediately southeast of Cuba, was reported by the discoverer to "their invincible majesties," Ferdinand and Isabella, in the most glowing terms for its "lofty mountains, plains, groves and very fruitful fields admirably adapted for tillage, pasture and habitation."

"The convenience and excellence of the harbors in this island and the abundance of rivers surpass anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it," the discoverer reported to his king and queen.

"Hispaniola" (Little Spain). Columbus named the island of Hayti and made further reports on the red-skinned Indian inhabitants who, he declared, "in their simplicity, bartered like idiots cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles and jars."

It is a long span from the Columbus description of virgin Hayti in 1492 to the primitive Hayti of modern times, but "Hispaniola" has today a peculiar interest for Americans, constituting as it does one of the most troublesome and likewise delicate problems that a national administration in Washington has been called upon to face in many years.

The Harding administration in Washington has inherited from Mr. Wilson's régime, however unwillingly, a situation in "Hispaniola" on the delicate handling of which will depend whether our future relations with all Latin-America shall again become the happy Monroe Doctrine co-operation of before the European war or remain those of suspicion and distrust which certainly exist at present. The new policy of the Harding administration toward the little Latin-American republics of modern "Hispaniola" is watched for eagerly in every Central and South American capital.

A brief sketch of our relations here would appear apropos at a moment when a new Secretary of State in Washington is engrossed in working out other interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine than have been applied by the United States in the Western Hemisphere for the past eight years.

Aside from all political phases, too, the comparatively small West Indian island of Hayti is a land of fertile interest for the student of more than elementary Columbian history; for lovers of historic romance, admirers of Londonian tales of tropic seas and for less sentimental and sober commercial futurists.

The island has two republics, the Dominican Republic to the east and the Republic of Hayti to the west. Approximately three million people, not one of them a descendant of the red Indians of the days of Columbus, inhabit the land. It is with the Republic of Hayti mainly that this article will deal. From many points of view it is the most interesting of all the island territories of the Columbian Western Hemisphere.

The "Black Republic" of today is not in the state of progress and affluence which Columbus must have dreamed for "Hispaniola." Its 10,000 square miles are crowded with about two million souls who have neither capability nor seeming capacity eventually for developing its excellent harbors, its fertile fields and abundance of rivers.

While a million people of Santo Domingo are mainly of Spanish strain and lighter in color, the mass of Haytians—about ninety-seven per cent of the whole—are of pure African blood and origin, dating their ancestry back to slave labor brought from Africa by the whites, the same whites who so thoroughly enslaved the Indians that they died like flies and eventually became extinct to a man.

Hayti is a land without schools. The mass is densely illiterate, clad poorly and often in rags and pattering a "creole" tongue which is a mixture of French, African and patois. And as distinct from the mass as dawn is from night is the *intelligencia* of the little republic, mulatto in blood and ranging in color from deep brown to high yellow. This class is but three per cent of the whole and its culture is that derived from association with European capitals and foreign universities.

Perhaps the high culture of Hayti's educated minority has been the cause of steady economic, commercial and agricultural decline during 115 years of independence. Change of government has not usually been in accord with desire to uplift the downtrodden

mass but practice of traditional tropic politics with the desire, as one student of the situation has expressed it, of the politically prominent "ins" to supersede the momentarily powerful "outs" and change of administration has never affected the common people in whose name most of the revolutionary propaganda was circulated.

Haytian rulers, some with expressed sincere convictions and others less honest, have held the executive power to the number of more than fifty during the independence gained from the French plantation and slave owners in the eighteenth century but never in the history of the country has the great mass of the common people had any voice in government.

Guillame Sam was the last Haytian executive to suffer violent death. On July 28, 1915, American Marines landed in Hayti. Sam was the sixth president in less than five years. Michel Laconte was blown up in the presidential palace. Tancrede Auguste died in his bed, it is said, by poison. Michel Oreste fled from the country to exile. Oreste Zamor was overthrown by a revolution and was killed. Joseph Davilmar Theodore served three months with dignity and then succumbed to a revolt led by Guillame Sam.

In an effort to forestall a revolution against himself, Guillame Sam caused a large number of the best families of Port-au-Prince, the Haytian capital, to be thrown into prison and then longing for action which did not come he ordered the entire batch executed. Relatives of the victims started something which Guillame Sam could not stop. They enlisted a mob and marched on the national palace. Sam took refuge in the French legation and here the mob found him. As they were carrying fragments of his body through the streets of Port-au-Prince, the Marines landed and put an end to the festival.

The Marines have remained in Hayti to the present. Under a treaty, alleged to have been written by Franklin D. Roosevelt, assistant Secretary of the Navy, and handed to the Haytian Government to sign, Marines may remain in Hayti for many years to come.

The benefits of Marine occupation in Hayti are not to be denied and more evident to those who can compare the "Black Republic" of today with that of 1915. Sanitation was the first problem and American experts worked against discouraging odds. They found squalor and filth everywhere. As before mentioned, but three per cent of Haytians are of the class to which the bathtub plays its part. The remaining percentage desire hygiene only when hygiene searches, finds and persists. The lack of body hygiene and general lack of sanitation was perhaps responsible for a mysterious disease among the lower class which is estimated to have killed twenty thousand natives annually for 50 years. When the Marines had been ashore long enough to begin the work of sanitation, it was necessary to send wagons throughout the larger cities at daybreak every morning to collect victims of the mysterious malady. The cities were little better off than the villages which were perhaps not so clean as the African settlements which they resembled.



Marine Barracks (foreground) and Presidential Palace, Port-au-Prince, Hayti.

It had been the convenient custom for generations to dump all rubbish, decayed fruit and filth in the highways and depend on nature to do the rest. Tropical rains and blazing suns produced vapors and odors guaranteed to convert all who had not lived through a survival of the strongest into victims of fever and disease. Epidemics through which even the strongest were liable to fall were a constant menace.

With this background, one may imagine by what

effort during a brief number of years that Americans have made the cities and villages of Hayti livable communities. Well-ordered streets and sanitation within limits everywhere are now the rule. Quarantine regulations for steamships are enforced by Americans for the first time in Haytian history. In 1882 smallpox brought to Hayti on a Jamaican ship swept the land and took off about two hundred thousand natives.

American Marines have built or repaired hundreds of miles of native highways since the occupation. Districts formerly inaccessible to other than foot or horse travel are today opened up for agricultural and commercial development, a development which has not yet come for reasons which will later be described. It is possible now to travel by auto between the main cities of the land, on plains, through fertile valleys and over beautiful mountains, a medium of communication unheard of until the Americans came.

Hayti is today more peaceful than at any other time in a century. In generations of strife and revolution, during which the country retrograded rather than progressed, the one necessity which called American forces to the "Black Republic" was peace. This peace is now a fact though it has been accomplished not without innumerable encounters over a period of years between the forces of occupation and groups of organized bandits infesting mainly the mountainous portions of the republic.

The coming of Marines to Hayti also sounded the death knell to the degrading practices of "voodoo" rites or snake worship which the ignorant mass celebrated everywhere. These rites for them took the place of any higher form of religion and are supposed to be the instinctive outgrowth of tribal orgies practiced by their ancestors in darkest Africa. The human sacrifice was among the most terrible features of "voodoo" festivals in the cities and in the bush. The Marines destroyed the "voodoo" temples, the great tom-toms which called the superstitious to their assemblies, and forbade any practice of "voodooism" everywhere.

Problems of spiritual betterment, sanitation and communication building were functions of the American Marine Brigade in Hayti which caused little comment at home. It was the rigorous manner in which the American "leathernecks" brought about peace in the "Black Republic" that eventually crept into the Harding political campaign at home and brought the Marine pacification program into the glare of publicity. Tales of mountain encounters between Marines with the Gendarmerie d'Hayti, the latter a subsidiary military organization composed of black troops officered by Marines, and Haytian bandits would fill a fair-sized volume. It is a sordid chapter of guerilla fighting in which Americans recalled the lessons of ancestral woodcraft and the examples set in the American Indian wars. When the last bandit chief had been killed and his forces scattered, the scene shifted to the United States. In a moment of exuberance assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt let slip in a campaign speech that he had written the Haytian constitution and it was a good one if he, himself, said so. This drew from the Republican presidential candidate in another part of the country, that United States Marines in Hayti, under the Wilson controlled Navy Department, had been charged with the "indiscriminate killing" of more than two thousand Haytians. Then the verbal fireworks began.

The political charges boiled down to a letter which Brigadier General George Barnett, U. S. M. C., had written Colonel John Russell, commander of the Marine Brigade in Hayti, expressing horror that "indiscriminate killings" of Haytian natives had been going on in the West Indian Republic. In this letter Barnett mentioned the Haytian casualty list which he placed at 3,200 but later reduced in subsequent testimony before a naval board to 2,200.

The Naval Board of Inquiry, composed of Admirals Mayo and Oliver and General Nivelle, of the Marine Corps, appointed by Secretary of the Navy Daniels held sessions first at Washington and later at the Haytian capital. The inquiry elicited that practically all Haytians "indiscriminately" killed had fallen in open combat between the forces of pacification and banditry. Officers of the Marines, in testimony, convinced the Naval Board that cases of "indiscriminate" killing were the isolated incidents which would befall any military organization